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AN INTERESTED PROPOSITION.

I AM a member of a rather ancient family, one which once occupied a much more elevated position in society than it does at the present writing, and which, during the reign of the last Henry, enjoyed rather extensive territorial possessions in a northern county. The Loosefits of Lancashire—I am a Loosefit—had wealth enough and to spare in those old days; but the later generations of the stock have, from the very causes which, according to the political economists, should have contributed to increase their substance, declined in prosperity and importance, and forfeited that claim to pre-eminence which it was once their pride to assert and maintain. The reader is not, however, to suppose that there has been any blot on the family scutcheon. No; our sole crime has been our fecundity; we have increased and multiplied too fast; for several generations past there has not been a single family of Loosefits who have not reared half-a-dozen healthy children at least, while some have even exceeded the half-score. Thus, it has happened that the hereditary acres, spite of the rigid laws of entail, became by degrees split up, distributed, alienated, and finally, with some inconsiderable exceptions, have slipped through the family fingers into other hands: thus it came to pass that I, a Loosefit in the direct line from Sir Lancelot Loosefit of Battlebrunt, found myself at my majority, with all my ancestral aversion to the defilements of commerce, the possessor of an income of a few hundreds a year only, secured on the old Battlebrunt estate, and heir to 'the Scrub,' a waste of some sixty acres on the skirts of Shindy-craggit.

I am not going to trouble the reader with my personal history, either before or after my majority: my object is rather to make him acquainted with the predicament in which I find myself at this present moment, and which, not being by any means peculiar to myself, must be interesting to many besides. I am some two or three years past fifty now, and the partner of my lot, whom I married thirty years ago, will touch the half-century this very month. I reside at Loosefit Lodge—that is the name we have given to our semi-detached villa at St John's Wood—and am the father of eight scions of the Loosefit stock; so that I and mine form no exception to the prolific capabilities which characterise our race. My son and heir, Augustus-George, and my seven daughters, Arabella, Clara, Maud, Florence, Amy, Lucinda, and Cornelia, form, although I say it myself, as fine a family as ever assembled round an English fireside; and my Honoria, their mamma, assures me that, in point of amiability and general attractiveness, our

dear girls are unexceptional. This maternal laudation, which the reader can supply for himself, is all very true and well deserved, I have no doubt, though I can never remember much of it, because, while Honoria is going on in this way, I am apt to be thinking of the confounded expense the dear girls have already put me to, and because I have a suspicion, which generally turns out to be correct, that these pleasing flatteries are but a prelude to a further demand upon my purse. Thank Heaven that Augustus-George is at last off my hands, and after the costly cramming and coaching, which I was sadly afraid would be all thrown away, has finally passed, and gone to battle his way as he best can among his brother-griffins in India. But my trouble is that the worst remains behind—that the girls, in spite of their undeniable charms and accomplishments, manifest no tendency to flit from the parent nest, and bless with their soothing cares the independent homes which they are all so well calculated to adorn. This it is which troubles me. There is Arabella, the eldest, in her twenty-ninth year, though, to be sure, she doesn't look it, and I am not such a brute as to remind her of it; and it is a fact, which I am compelled to admit to myself, and which my wife, I know, admits to herself, though, for the sake of each other's feelings, we keep our convictions in our own breast, that all the others are grown up to 'womanly estate,' as it is called, though where the 'estate' is, I should very much like to know. Not that this condition of affairs is so palpable to everybody as it is to us; the three youngest, Amy, Lucinda, and Cornelia, are still styled 'the children,' and are made to do lessons and submit to the authority of the elders, though it is becoming plainer day by day that that domestic comedy is approaching its last act; indeed, it would have been played out long ago, but that Honoria is unwilling to obtrude the maturity of the elder girls, and insists on the continuance of this little deception, which, by the way, has its advantages in a pecuniary point of view. Even while the girls were children, it was no small struggle to do justice to them all, and to keep Augustus-George at Doctor Drencham's, while he was getting prepared for Ailebury, but we managed it on the whole (Mrs Loosefit is a most excellent manager) tolerably well. Arabella—bless her!—worked incessantly, day and night, at French, Italian, German, piano and guitar, fancy-work and flower-painting, and really did wonders, becoming so far advanced at length, that by the time she was nineteen, we were in a condition to discharge the governess, and induct her into the post. It is true, the girls had each and all to be finished off with a year at a genteel seminary; and Miss Backboard's

terms were seventy guineas per annum, not to mention the entrance-money, and the silver forks and spoons, which never found their way home again. This, in connection with the cost of Augustus-George's outfit, led us into some temporary embarrassment; but we escaped from that at last by the sacrifice of the Shindycraggit property, which, although it enabled us to speak casually concerning our estate in Lancashire, was never the source of much addition to our income. I was unwilling to part with the land, though it was but a waste, but was induced to the sacrifice for the sake of the girls, who, I hoped, would go off all the quicker for the polish they would receive at Miss Backboard's. I am sorry to say that at present there are no symptoms of even a prospective decrease in our family circle; the dear girls go on harmoniously together, but there are no signs of their going off. It is true that Cornelia, the youngest, after a temporary visit to an aunt at Brighton, came home about three months ago in a state of solemn flutter and excitement, which alarmed us at first with fears for the dear child's health, but which turned out to be the result of some attentions she had received from young Adolphus Paget, who has a post at the Treasury and good expectations, and who made his appearance at St John's Wood shortly after, where he was elceted with Honoria for a full hour, while I was away at the club. What took place I do not exactly know; but I do know that the affair, and especially the apparition of the lover himself, created a most indignant sensation among the elder girls, who were shocked at the indelicacy of the idea; and that Mrs Looselit—who probably thought, and, indeed, she said as much, that it was beginning at the wrong end—put a period to the business in the most decisive manner, and sent Mr Paget to the right-about.

Meanwhile, I cannot escape from the fact, that the seven dear and charming sisters are an awful drag upon my limited means. It is the confounded dress, the everlasting vagaries of female costume, and the 'little bills' it involves, which are the cause of my profound anxieties. The old system of management which we carried out when the girls were conveniently dissimilar in stature, and ranked like a row of pillars drawn in perspective—Arabella, at five feet seven, representing the foreground, and Cornelia, at four feet one, the vanishing point—and which enabled us to work the same expensive garment through the whole descending series by a little ingenious cutting, transforming, and perhaps occasional dyeing—that system is no longer available. The dear girls have grown of a uniform height; they are all five feet seven, or within an inch of it more or less—and it is impossible to economise on the old plan in the face of such distressing uniformity of stature. The dresses of the elders will no longer come in for the younger branches; and if they would, I know well enough that the younger branches, who feel what is due to themselves, would rebel against wearing them. As Mrs Looselit says, the girls must dress, or they have no chance of going off, and you may as well bury them alive, in this age of refinement, as make dowdies of them; accomplished and amiable as they are, you cannot circulate them in society without the passport of fashionable attire. Mrs Looselit is right; it must be so—spite of the sarcastic dictum of that fellow Cowper, who lived in the bush like a savage, and never had daughters to establish in the world, we unfortunate fathers of feminine families must conform to the decrees of Society, which rules us with a rod of iron. Though dress 'drains our cellars dry,' and 'makes our larders lean,' we must submit, or worse will happen.

Now, all these candid confessions of mine are introductory to a proposition which I have to make to that class of public benefactors who are constantly appealing to us in the newspapers, and who live by administering to the wants of their fellow-creatures.

What I would wish some enterprising speculators to establish forthwith, would be a species of Milliners' and Dressmakers' Mudie—a grand central female wardrobe for general circulation, having, of course, branch dépôts in the provinces—where such necessities as bonnets, mantles, dresses, shawls, and cloaks, including every variety of fashionable attire that goes to the making up of the outer woman in this fashionable age, might be selected for temporary wear, and returned as soon as the wearers were tired of them, and exchanged for others. The rates of the annual or quarterly subscriptions for these advantages might be easily assessed in just proportion to the frequency of the changes and the description of goods required by the subscribers. There is no doubt that the speculation would pay exceedingly well; and if it were inaugurated by a joint-stock company, with limited liability, I would not mind taking a few shares myself. Such an establishment would afford to women what all women are so fond of—a continual variety in dress—and would save them from the mortification of feeling that they were the subjects of ill-natured remarks through wearing the same dress for any length of time. Where is the experienced paterfamilias who does not know that, in regard to female costume, it is very often not the decay of the material that annoys the fair wearer so much as the obstinate endurance of it? The Dressmakers' Mudie would abolish all that. How glad should I be to enter the names of my seven charming girls as subscribers, and to pay anything in reason for a constant supply of the costume most in fashion—and there must be thousands in circumstances similar to mine who doubtless would be ready to accord their patronage to the plan. I acknowledge there is a difficulty to be got over as regards the fitting department: all the charming women are not, like my dear girls, exactly five feet seven—some are a little dumpy, and some, it is possible, are a little stout, or even fat; but a set of easy directions might be prepared which would enable the subscribers to forward their individual measures in cases where they could not attend in person; and in this era of elastic fabrics, any little inaccuracies might be compensated by the application of the elastic principle to the articles of circulating costume. Think of this promising proposition, O my advertising friends—prepare your materials, pitch your habitation, and publish your tariff—and above all, be quick about it, for I am anxious to become an immediate subscriber.

TUNING-FORKS AND MUSICAL PITCH.

THE Society of Arts has been occupying itself with a very curious question, well suited to a body not exactly scientific, artistic, or industrial, and yet occupying a sort of borderland between those three domains of inquiry. This question relates to the standard of musical pitch, as determined by a tuning-fork or other instrument yielding a uniform sound. Singers and other musical people are becoming perplexed by the gradually increasing elevation of pitch in the music they sing or play. '*Vivi tu*' or '*Suivez moi*,' '*Il mio tesoro*' or '*Let the bright Seraphim*,' are not pitched at a higher standard—on paper—than they were in the days when the respective composers sent forth those melodies into the world; and yet the singers feel and know that they are higher, when striving to make them in accord with their accompanying instruments. It is certain that C₄, or A₄, or F₄, are not the same notes now as they were in the early part of the century; they, and all other notes in the scale, are sharper than before, and are becoming sharper and sharper as time goes on. How much longer can this process continue without ruining the beautiful voices of our public singers? How much longer will it be before singing becomes screaming?

Verdi is said to have ruined some of the finest voices in Europe, by introducing so many loud and high notes in his vocal music; but even music composed in lower keys is becoming more difficult to sing than formerly, because each note of a particular name is rising in actual pitch. The French government—the French like to have things done for them by their government, even to the tuning of fiddles—and the Society of Arts in this country, are trying to dive down to the bottom of this evil, with a view of devising a remedy.

All sounds are produced by vibrations of the air; and when those vibrations are sufficiently numerous within a space of time, the sound is musical. If there are very many vibrations in a second, the sound is high or acute; if fewer, it is low or grave. When the largest pipe in the largest church-organ is giving forth its vast body of sound, the air is agitated by about thirty-two vibrations in a second; when a *prima donna* is giving forth her notes in *altissimo*, the vibrations are very many thousands in a second; and there is every shade of variety between these two extremes. We, of course, may give any name we please to any sound; but it is necessary to adopt some name, in order to be intelligible to each other. Musicians agree to designate by the letter C a particular note, and by six other letters of the alphabet six other sounds bearing peculiar relations to it. The middle C of the pianoforte, or the lowest C on the flute, sometimes called tenor C, is due to a rapidity of vibrations, varying from about 500 to 540 in a second. Why it is that this wide range exists, is the very point on which learned people are now debating and inquiring. When we speak of the particular note in question, we always mean one due to about 520 vibrations—a few more or less—per second; and we assume that all the other notes in the octave, and all the octaves in the scale, bear a determinate relation to this number. Love of brevity prevents us from indicating the means by which this amazing rapidity of vibration can be measured.

A commission and a committee, of which we shall say something presently, have collected abundant evidence that the standard of pitch has risen and is rising. But before going further, we must make still two remarks necessary for the clear understanding of this matter. The first is, that the word *diapason*, though having various shades of meaning, is now often used in exactly the same sense as musical pitch; and we shall therefore employ either term at pleasure. The second is, that in speaking of any particular musical note being due to (say) 500 vibrations per second, we mean 500 *single* vibrations; some writers call this number 250, just as if we were to say that one vibration or oscillation of a pendulum consists of the swing in one direction, and then back again; but it is now usually deemed more convenient to consider the single swing, or the movement of the vibrating body in one direction, as a vibration; and it is in that sense that the middle C of the pianoforte is due to something more than 500 vibrations per second.

Glück's operas, composed in the last century, prove, by the manner in which the vocal parts are arranged, that his music was intended for a much lower diapason than that now in use. Nearly all church organs, especially those of old date, are below the present opera and concert pitch: in some instances to the extent of more than a whole tone. Messrs Broadwood, the celebrated pianoforte-makers, have in their possession three tuning-forks of different pitch: one, corresponding with the Philharmonic standard thirty years ago, is used by them for tuning pianos intended for accompaniments at vocal concerts; a second, higher in pitch, is employed for tuning pianos to take part in orchestral compositions; and a third, still higher, is the Opera and Philharmonic standard of the present day. Thus is afforded curious proof of this tendency of the diapason to travel upwards; there is a differ-

ence of about a semitone between the first and third of these forks. They have the means, at the Grand Opera of Paris, of tracing the diapason ever since the year 1699; and there is no departure whatever from the rule that this standard has a tendency to change, always in an upward direction: the middle C was 489 vibrations in 1699, and 538 in 1859. In the last-named year, the Opera standard in London, St Petersburg, and Berlin, was even higher by a few vibrations than that at Paris. Some years ago, when the Royal Society of Musicians used to furnish a band to assist at the annual concert of the charity children at St Paul's—a concert this year (1860) held at the Crystal Palace—it was found impossible for some of the instruments to tune down to the pitch of the cathedral organ; and, as a consequence, Mr Goss was much troubled how to hide the discords. The same skilful organist was embarrassed in a similar way during the performance of the music in the cathedral on the occasion of the funeral of the Duke of Wellington in 1852; because the pitch of all the other instruments, made in recent years, was higher than that of the old organ. In 1858, there were three provincial Musical Festivals held in towns where there are large organs; there was a difference of at least a semitone between the highest and lowest of the organs; and the leading orchestral players, who went from London to the festivals, were much puzzled how to adapt their diapason to the exigencies of each case. French musical instruments, made for sale in England, are tuned higher than those intended for use in France, on account of the difference of diapason between the two countries. Mr Tutton, who for a quarter of a century has been connected with the fine band of the Horse Guards, finds that the pitch has gradually been rising during that period, through causes not evident to him at the time. Madame Otto Goldschmidt, *née* Jenny Lind, has publicly stated, that even in the short space of twelve years the pitch has risen sufficiently to make the change painfully felt by the singers of high-voiced or soprano music. At Exeter Hall, the directors have found it a somewhat difficult matter to determine on the tuning of the organ: seeing that Handel's standard pitch was very much lower than the more recent one of Mendelssohn, and that it is impossible to make the same organ do equal justice to the oratorios of both composers, without doing a little injustice to both. Lastly, 'an eminent performer, acting on previous experience, provided himself, on a recent musical tour, with no less than *thirteen* concertinas, tuned to different pitches, varying to the extent of about a tone and a half!'

Next comes the question, *why* does the standard of musical pitch tend to rise? If all the players in the chief European countries are irresistibly bent to do this, there must be some cause worth finding out. So far as concerns musical instruments constructed of wood, metal, or fibre, it is possible to raise the standard of tone very considerably; but this is not the case in reference to the human voice, which remains pretty much the same in the nineteenth as it was in the eighteenth and preceding centuries; and therefore, as our vocalists frankly acknowledge that the standard is becoming too high for them, it is a fair question to ask, why they consent to be bound by it? The fault is thrown upon the instrumentalists and instrument-makers. There is a feeling among these persons that music is more 'brilliant' when played on instruments tuned to a high pitch; and as brilliancy is one of the effects at which they aim, they would rather sacrifice the singers than lose the chance of attaining this end. The great improvements made during the last few years in wind-instruments have, in almost all cases, been accompanied by a rise in pitch. When the Emperor Alexander I. became 'proprietor' or colonel of an Austrian regiment, he ordered new instruments to be made for the

band; the manufacturer, in order to increase the brilliancy of tone, unhesitatingly raised the pitch considerably; and the example was thereupon followed by other military bands, who all raised their diapason. This belief in increased brilliancy or sonority, seems to prevail very much among military musicians; but the truth of the opinion is in part contested by many violinists, who assert, that, whatever may be said as to brilliancy, stringed instruments lose a portion of their sonority or body of sound by being screwed up to a high diapason. M. Bender, conductor of the band of the Guides at Brussels, actually employs two diapasons; one, too high for vocal music, being especially intended to give brilliancy to military instruments. It is believed by many persons, on fair evidential probability, that tuning-forks are subject to slight molecular changes affecting the rapidity of vibration; so that, to some extent, a standard itself may cease to be a standard in lapse of time. The effect of changes of temperature and moisture in organ-pipes is still more considerable, and more generally admitted. Mr Hullah states, that the organ at St Martin's Hall never gives forth the same musical pitch during morning rehearsal as during evening concert, on account of the difference of temperature; and that he is thereby much tried in his endeavours to bring all the instruments and voices into harmony with the organ. Some of the sensitive performers in Mr Costa's magnificent opera-band clearly appreciate a difference between the winter and summer diapason of that orchestra, due entirely to difference of temperature. Sir John Herschel, a man who is as learned in the philosophy of music as in other kinds of philosophy, has pointed out a probable cause for the tendency of the diapason to rise, in the *modulations* belonging to the theory of harmony; but we shall not attempt to deal with that abstruse matter here.

And now concerning the remedial measures for this musical malady. First, we may mention a reform partly carried out about thirty years ago. The Philharmonic Society, a great authority in all musical matters, being desirous of settling a determinate musical pitch, the subject was taken up by Sir George Smart, Mrs Billington, Mr Braham, and Mr Griesbach, representing respectively the conductors, the lady singers, the male singers, and the instrumentalists of the London concert-rooms. They agreed, by a method of compromise, as to the standard of pitch which would most nearly meet the wishes of all, without troubling themselves about acoustics or vibrations, or any other scientific lore; then they requested Mr Broadwood to prepare a tuning-fork correspondent thereto, which was found to give about 520 vibrations for the note C; and this became the Philharmonic standard for many years. The next notable reform was effected in Germany by a number of leading musicians who met at Stuttgart in 1834; they agreed upon a tuning-fork which all would adopt; and to this fork, sounding the note A, they gave 880 vibrations, corresponding with 528 for tenor C. A notable movement was next due to Mr Hullah. When this gentleman commenced teaching singing in London on Wilhelm's system, about the year 1842, his pupils wanted tuning-forks all uniform in pitch; because this particular method of teaching vocal music is maintained independent of all instrumental accompaniment. He found that the tuning-forks existing at that time were very discordant; some were made to sound the note A, others to sound C; but the A of one fork was dolefully out of tune with that of another, and the same was true of the group of C forks. He made arrangements for procuring any required number of forks uniform in pitch, and decided that the number of vibrations adopted as the standard for tenor C should be 512. Some of the existing forks were above this standard, others were below it; it was a convenient mean at that

time. Moreover, it afforded great facility for calculation, seeing that the successive octaves of the standard note would be represented by the successive doubling of numbers—1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, &c. The tuning of the forks was undertaken by Mr Tomlinson, who, by a careful use of Cagniard de la Tour's *Sirène*, prepared many hundreds all exactly alike in pitch. If composers, conductors, vocalists, instrumentalists, and instrument-makers had chosen to adopt the same standard as Mr Hullah, the discordant concords—a phrase that really does express the thing meant—of our musicians would have been cured; but they did not, and so the doctors have had again to be called in.

They are French doctors of whom we shall now speak, who look up to the government for inspiration. About the middle of the year 1858, the imperial government appointed a commission to inquire into the best mode of establishing a *diapason normal*, or standard musical pitch. The names of the commissioners comprised many well known in the realms of music—such as Meyerbeer, Rossini, Auber, Berlioz, Halévy, and Ambrose Thomas, as well as a few men of science. These commissioners employed about half a year on the inquiry, and presented a report early in 1859. They started with a unanimous admission that the standard of pitch differs in different countries; that it differs among different musical establishments even in one and the same country; that there is a tendency everywhere to an elevation of pitch; and that great confusion arises from this circumstance. They collected music-forks from various parts of Europe, tested them all, and solicited opinions as to which of them, if any, possessed the best requirements for a standard. Nearly every one agreed that the Paris Opera standard should be lowered; but then came the question, how much? Some proposed a lowering of a quarter of a semitone, in order that existing musical instruments might easily be adapted to it; some half a semitone; and some a complete semitone. The commissioners found that, all things considered, the wishes of musical persons would most nearly be consulted by lowering the standard pitch about half a semitone. They recommended that the Opera A fork should be lowered from 896 to 870 vibrations per second, equivalent to a lowering from 538 to 522 for tenor C. Consequent upon this, there appeared one of those Napoleonic decrees which seem to be equally applicable to the annexation of a province and the making of a tuning-fork. By this decree, the standard above named is sanctioned; it is to be compulsory upon all musical establishments supported in any way by the state; the standard tuning-fork is to be deposited with the *Conservatoire de Musique*; and all the other establishments are to keep verified copies of it. The normal diapason was to come into force in Paris on the 1st of July 1859, and in the provinces on the 1st of December following; and after those dates, no musical instruments were to be admitted into the public establishments unless constructed and attuned according to the standard.

This brief notice of the French commission will prepare us to trace the operations of the English committee. Rather more than a year ago, Mr Harry Chester drew the attention of Mr Dilke to the proceedings of the French commission, and pointed out how desirable it would be if a reform on this subject could be wrought in England as well as in France. Both were members of the Council of the Society of Arts; and in a written communication, Mr Chester added: 'It occurs to me that, in the absence of any competent musical authority legally or officially established in England, the Society of Arts might convene a conference of musical magnates, amateurs as well as professionals, composers, instrument-makers, vocalists, and instrumentalists, to discuss the subject, and to determine whether the society should frame a

resolution, and get it extensively signed: to the effect that the persons signing accepted the French decision, and would use their influence to procure the adoption of the same uniform pitch. By such a measure, we might make what would be equivalent to a voluntary law for ourselves; and public opinion, thus expressed, would lead the instrument-makers generally to confine themselves to that standard.' Consequent on this suggestion, a meeting was held at the rooms of the Society of Arts, on the 3d of June 1859; and a very remarkable meeting it was, at which there was a strong muster of musical men. We find the names of Benedict, Blagrove, Broadwood, Collard, Ella, Godfrey, Otto Goldschmidt, Gray, Davison, Hill, Walker, Willis (these last five being organ-builders), Griesbach, Hullah, Lindsey Sloper, Sir George Smart, Wyld, Wornum. One lady graced the assembly: Madame Jenny Goldschmidt Lind. Many of these persons spoke on the occasion; and letters, expressive of opinion, were received from Miss Dolby, Cipriani Potter, Alfred Mellon, Mr Goss, Sir Frederick Gore Ouseley, and other persons known in the world of music. The musical critics and the musical amateurs were also strongly represented; and physical and mathematical science appeared there in the persons of Dr Whewell, Dr Arnott, and Professor Lunn. What was done and said on that occasion, we need not trace with any fulness, seeing that many of the facts stated in the former part of this article rest on the authority of competent persons present at the meeting. Suffice it to say, that almost every one agreed in opinion that the diapason has gradually risen; that it is still rising; that a further rise ought, if possible, to be checked; and that the settlement of a definite standard, once for all, is very desirable. Some thought that the human voice ought to be held chiefly in view, in settling this standard, while others wished rather to rely on musical instruments; but all assented to the appointment of a committee, to be intrusted with a searching examination of the subject. An enormous committee, consisting of more than fifty persons, was named—possibly under the belief that unpaid committeemen, as usual, would seldom attend very punctually. Composers, conductors, vocalists, instrumentalists, professors, amateurs, connoisseurs, and critics, were among the members of the committee; while the scientific phase of the subject was to be watched over by Dr Arnott, Professors Goodeve, Lunn, De Morgan, Wheatstone, and Willis, and Dr Whewell.

While the committee were engaged in their labours, Sir John Herschel sent a written statement of his opinions. He stoutly fought for the 512. He expressed astonishment that the French commission had determined on 522, as the number of vibrations for standard C; and as he felt convinced that, sooner or later, we must come to the mathematically simple and easily calculated 512, he proposed to work the reform at once and effectively, by adopting those figures. The instrument-makers will be a little puzzled by any change; but he thinks the puzzlement would not be increased by making the full required alteration at once.

After just twelve months' labours, the committee presented their Report in June of the present year. The Report states that all the persons examined agree that the pitch has risen, and that a standard not permitted to indulge in further alteration would be very desirable; they nearly all agree that this standard ought to be lower than the present opera pitch; but that much diversity of opinion exists as to the question, how much the lowering ought to be. The musical instruments now in use could be coaxed to a little lower standard; but this coaxing would be inoperative if tried to the extent of a semitone. In other words, existing orchestral instruments tuned up to the opera pitch of 546, could not, except in a few special kinds of instrument, be lowered to 512; and

therefore players would have to buy new instruments, to accommodate themselves to the new order of things. This, the committee think, would ruin the proposed reform altogether; for instrumentalists would not like to be out of pocket, chiefly to please the vocalists. Among many suggested solutions, the committee chose the following: Nearly midway between 546 and 512 is 528, the diapason established by the Stuttgart musicians in 1834. Now, the instrumental players informed the committee that they could lower their tone to this extent without much inconvenience; while the vocalists admitted that it would be an improvement on the present standard, although not to the extent that might be wished. Moreover, 528 happens to be a good number for the fundamental note of the octave; because it admits of the other notes of the scale being expressed in whole numbers, without fractions. They therefore gave a nearly unanimous vote for 528.

At a general meeting which followed the presentation of the Report, Sir John Herschel, Mr Wentworth Dilke, and Mr Chorley, energetically struggled for 512; they thought we *must* come to it at last, and therefore the sooner the better. Being beaten, they next tried to make the standard 528 merely a temporary one, to be accepted with an understood proviso that, at some future period, it should be changed to 512. But this was opposed by nearly all the committee; on the ground that the committee's labours would be quite fruitless unless they were able to suggest a diapason which would be both generally acceptable and regarded as final. Even Mr Hullah, favourable to his old 512, consented to forego it altogether for the sake of unanimity.

And so this very curious matter rests. Whether 522, imperial measure, will really be obeyed by French musicians; whether a non-official 528 will govern English fiddlers and pipers; whether 546 will insist on reigning at Covent Garden, and 512 at St Martin's Hall—the future must shew. We offer no apologies for drawing the reader's attention to the matter; for—what with Handel and Mendelssohn Festivals, Tonic Sol Fas, Orpheonic Meetings, Monday Popular Concerts, Brass Band Contests, Italian Operas two or three deep, and Canterbury Balls without number—we are becoming a very musical people; while the subject is really an interesting and curious one.

THE WILD HUNTRESS.

CHAPTER XXIV.—WAITING THE WORD.

In truth was it a fearful moment—one to shake the steadiest nerves, or thrill the stoutest heart. To me, it was an ordeal far more terrible than that of an ordinary duel; for there was lacking the motive—at least on my side—which usually stimulates to an affair of honour. Sense of wrong I felt; but too slightly for revenge—not enough to steel the heart to the spilling of blood. Anger I *had* felt but the moment before; and then I could have fought, even to the death; but my blood, that had boiled up for an instant, now ran coldly through my veins. The unexpected behaviour of my adversary had calmed my wrath—acting upon it like oil upon troubled water.

Thus to fight without seconds; to die without friend to speak the last word of worldly adieu; or to take the life of another, without human being to attest the fairness of the act; no earthly eye beholding us; no living creature save the black vultures—appropriate instruments to give the death-signal—ominous witnesses of the dark deed: such were the appalling reflections that came before my mind, as I stood facing my determined antagonist.

It would scarcely be true to say, that I felt not fear; and yet it was less cowardice, than a sort of vague

vexation at risking my life in so causeless a conflict. There was something absolutely ludicrous in standing up to be shot at, merely to square with the whim of this eccentric squatter; and to shoot at him seemed equally ridiculous. Either alternative, upon reflection, appeared the very essence of absurdity; and, having ample time to reflect, while awaiting the signal, I could not help thinking how farcical was the whole affair.

No doubt, I might have laughed at it, had I been a mere looker-on—herald or spectator; but, unfortunately, being a principal in this deadly duetto—a real wrestler in the backwoods arena—the provocative to mirth was given in vain; and only served to heighten the solemnity of the situation.

The circumstances might have elicited laughter; but the contingency, turn whatever way it might, was too serious to admit of levity on my part. Either horn of the dilemma presented a sharp point. To suffer one's self to be killed, in this *sans façon*, was little else than suicide—while to kill, smacked strongly of murder!

And one or the other was the probable issue—nay, more than probable: for as I bent my eyes on the resolute countenance of my *vis-à-vis*, I felt certain that there was no chance of escaping from the terrible alternative. He stood perfectly immobile—his long rifle raised to the 'ready,' with its muzzle pointing towards me—and in his eye I could not read the slightest sign, that he wavered in his determination! That grey-green orb was the only member that moved: his body, limbs, and features were still and rigid, as the stump behind which he stood. The eye alone shewed signs of life. I could see its glance directed towards three points—in such rapid succession, that it might be said to look 'three ways at once'—to the decoy upon the ground, to the shadowy forms upon the tree, and towards myself—its chief object of surveillance!

'Merciful Heavens! is there no means to avert this doom of dread? Is it an absolute necessity, that I must either kill this colossus, or be myself slain? Is there no alternative? Is there still no chance of an arrangement?

Hopeless as it appeared, I resolved to make a last effort for peace. Once more I should try the force of an appeal. If he refused to assent to it, my position would be no worse. Better, indeed: since I stood in need of some stimulus to rouse me to an attitude, even of defence. This thought swaying me, I called out:

'Holt! you are a brave man. I know it. Why should this go on? It is not too late'—

'You air a coward!' cried he, interrupting me, 'an' I know it—a sneakin' coward, in spite o' yar soger clothes! Shet up yar durned head, or ye'll scare away the birds! an', by the tarnation! ef you do, I'll fire at ye, the fust that takes wing!'

'Let that be the signal, then!' cried I, roused to an impatient indignation by this new insult: '*the first that takes wing!*'

'Agreed!' was the quick rejoinder, delivered in a tone that bespoke determination to abide by it.

My irresolution troubled me no longer. Thus driven to bay, I felt that further forbearance would not only be idle, but dangerous. It was playing with my life, to leave it in the hands of this unrelenting enemy. Better make *him* suffer for his sanguinary folly, than be myself its victim.

Stirred by these thoughts, I grasped my rifle—now for the first time with a determination to make use of it. By the same prompting, my eye became active—watching with resolute regard the movements of the birds, and measuring the ground that separated me from my adversary.

Notwithstanding the sting which his words had inflicted, I was yet hampered by some considerations of mercy. I had no desire to *kill* the man, if I could avoid it. To 'cripple' him would be sufficient.

I had no fear of his having the shot before me. Much practice had given me such adroitness in the use of my weapon, that I could handle it with the quickness and skill of a juggler. Neither did I fear to miss my aim. I had perfect reliance on the sureness of my sight; and, with such a mark as the huge body of the squatter, it was impossible I could miss. In this respect, the advantage was mine; and, at so short a distance, I could have insured a fatal shot—had such been my intention. But it was not; the very contrary was my wish—to draw blood, without inflicting a mortal wound. This would perhaps satisfy the honour of my antagonist, and bring our strife to an end.

Whether any such consideration was in his mind, I could not tell. It was not visible in his eye—nor his features that, throughout the whole scene, preserved their stern statue-like rigidity.

There was no help for it—no alternative but to shoot at him, and shoot him down—if possible, only to wing him; but, of course, a sense of my own danger rendered this last of less than secondary importance.

A single exchange of shots would, no doubt, decide the affair; and the advantage would lie to him who was 'quickest on the trigger.'

To obtain this advantage, then, I watched with eager eye the behaviour of the birds. In like manner was my antagonist occupied.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DUEL DELAYED.

Full five minutes passed, and not one of the vultures shewed sign of stirring—five minutes of prolonged and terrible suspense.

It was odd that the birds had not at once swooped down upon the piece of venison: since it lay conspicuously upon the ground—almost under the tree where they were perched! A score of them there were—ranged along the dead limbs—each with an eye keen of sight as an eagle's! Beyond doubt, they observed the object—they would have seen it a mile off, and recognised it too—why, then, were they disregarding it—a circumstance so contradictory of their natural instincts and habits, that, even in that dread hour, I remarked its singularity?

The cause was simple enough: no doubt the birds had already glutted themselves elsewhere. Some wild beast of the wood—more likely, some straying ox—had fallen a victim to disease and the summer heats; and his carcass had furnished them with their morning's meal. There was evidence of the truth of this, in their blood-stained beaks and gorged maws, as also the indolent attitudes in which they roosted—many of them apparently asleep! Others at intervals stretched forth their necks, and half spread their wings; but only to yawn, and catch the cooling breeze. Not one of all the listless flock, shewed the slightest disposition to take wing.

There were several already in the air, wheeling high aloft; and two or three had just joined their companions, increasing the cluster upon the tree. These had arrived, after we had taken our stand; and others were constantly coming down. But the signal mutually agreed to was mutually understood: it was the *departure* of one of the birds—not its *arrival*—that was to give the cue of *entrée* to the tragic act—the signal for the scene of death.

Those five minutes to me appeared fifty—ah! far more than that: for, brief as was the actual time, a world of thoughts passed through my mind during its continuance. The past and future were alike considered. The memory of home, kindred, and friends; the probability that all such ties were to be severed now and for ever; some regret that laurels lately won were to be so briefly worn; the near prospect of life's termination; of a death inglorious—perhaps scarcely to be recorded; vague visions of a future world; doubts

not unmingled with dread, about the life to come: such were the thoughts that whirled confusedly through my brain.

And the *proximate* past had also its share in my reflections—perhaps occupying the largest space of all. That thing of light and gold—who but an hour ago had filled my heart to overflowing—was still there, mingling with its last emotions! Was I never more to look upon that radiant form? never more behold that face so divinely fair? never more listen to that melodious voice? Never more!

The negative answer to these mental interrogatives—though only conjectural—was the bitterest reflection of all!

Still stir not the vultures: only to preen their black plumes with fetid beak; or, extending their broad wings, to shadow the sunbeam from their bodies. It is the hour of noon; and the sun, shining down from the zenith, permeates the atmosphere with his sultriest rays. The birds droop under the extreme heat. It imbues them with a listless torpor. Carrion itself would scarce tempt them from their perch.

Five minutes have elapsed; and not one moves from the tree—neither to swoop to the earth, nor soar aloft in the air.

I no longer wish them to tarry. The suspense is terrible to endure—the more so from the ominous stillness that reigns around. Since the last angry challenge, not a word has been exchanged between my adversary and myself. In sullen silence, we eye each other, with scintillating glances watching for the signal.

The situation was more than unpleasant. I longed for the *finale*. My antagonist also showed signs of impatience. No longer preserving his statue-like pose, his body began to sway from side to side; while at intervals, he stamped the ground with his heavy heel. From the increasing anger that betrayed itself in his looks, I expected an explosion.

It came at length.

'Durn them buzzards!' cried he, with a hurried gesture, 'thar a gwine to keep us stannin' hyar till sundown. Durn the sleepy brutes! we can't wait no longer on 'em. I dare ye'—

The challenge thus commenced was never completed—at all events, I did not hear its conclusion; and know not to this hour what he meant to have proposed. His speech was either interrupted, or his voice drowned, by the shrill neighing of my horse—who seemed startled at some sound from the forest. Almost at the same instant, I heard a responsive neigh, as if an echo from behind me.

I heeded neither the one nor the other: I saw that the birds were aroused from their lethargic attitude. Some of them appeared as if pressing upon their limbs to spring upward from the tree. The drendly moment had come!

With my rifle raised almost to the level, I glanced rapidly towards my antagonist. His piece was also raised; but, to my astonishment, he appeared to be grasping it mechanically, as if hesitating to take aim! His glance, too, showed irresolution: instead of being turned either upon myself or the vultures, it was bent in a different direction, and regarding with fixed stare some object behind me!

I was turning to ascertain the cause, when I heard close at hand the trampling of a horse; and, almost at the same instant, an exclamation, uttered in the metallic tones of a woman's voice. This was followed by a wild scream; and, simultaneously with its utterance, I beheld a female form springing over the bars! It was a young girl, whom I recognised at a glance, as she I had encountered in the forest!

I had not time to recover from my surprise before the girl had glided past me; and I followed her with my eyes, as she ran rapidly over the space that separated me from the squatter. Still mute with surprise, I saw her fling herself on the breast of my

colossal antagonist, at the same time crying out in a tone of passionate entreaty:

'Father, dear father! what has he done? Mercy! O mercy!'

'Good God! her father? Holt her father!'

'Away, Lil!' cried he in a peremptory tone, removing her arms from his neck. 'Away, gurl! git ye gone from hyar!'

'No, father! dear father! you will not? What does it mean? What has he done? Why are you angry with him!'

'Done! gurl! He's called me *coward*; an' 'ud drive us out o' house an' home. Git you gone, I say! Into the house wi' ye!—away!'

'Mercy! O father, have mercy! Do not kill him. He is brave—he is beautiful! If you knew'—

'Brave? beautiful?—gurl, yar ravin'! What do you know about him? Ye've never seed him afore?'

'Yes, dear father! only an hour ago. If you but knew—it was he who saved me. But for him—Father! he must not—he shall not die!'

'Saved ye? What do ye mean, gurl?'

'Hilloo! what's all this rumpus?'

The familiar ejaculation, and its adjunct interrogatory, admonished me that a new personage had appeared upon the scene. The voice came from behind.

On turning, I beheld the unexpected speaker—a man on horseback, who had ridden up to the bars; and having halted there, was craning his neck into the enclosure—gazing upon the scene that was being enacted there, with a singular half-comic, half-satirical expression of countenance!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FRACMAKER.

Without knowing why, I hailed the arrival of this stranger as opportune. Perhaps his presence, added to the entreaties of that fair young creature—still urgent in my behalf—might prevent the effusion of blood. Indeed, I had already determined that none should be spilled by me—let the consequences be as they might; and whatever was to be the *dénouement* of this awkward affair, I had resolved that my rifle should have nought to do in deciding it. The piece had fallen to the 'order arms'; the ill-omened birds had forsaken their perch; and, now soaring in the blue sky, almost beyond the reach of human vision, their movements were no longer heeded—either by my adversary or myself.

Turning away from the stranger—whom I had only regarded for a second or two—I faced again to the more interesting tableau in front of me. That, too, was rapidly undergoing a change. The squatter no longer clung to his rifle: the girl had taken it from his hands; and was hurrying with it into the door of the cabin. There was no hindrance made by my antagonist! on the contrary, he appeared to have delivered it over to her—as if the affair between us was to have a pacific termination, or, at all events, a respite.

What surprised me more than all was the altered demeanour of my adversary. His whole manner seemed to have undergone a sudden change. Sudden it must have been: since it had taken place during the second or two, while my attention was occupied by the newly arrived horseman. What still further astonished me, was, that this transformation was evidently produced by the presence of the stranger himself!

That it was not due to the young girl's interference, I had evidence already. That had not moved him for a moment. Her earnest appeal had received a repulse—energetic and decisive, as it was rude; and of itself would certainly not have saved me.

Beyond doubt, then, was I indebted to the stranger, for the truce so unexpectedly entered upon.

The change in Holt's demeanour was not more sudden than complete. At first, an air of astonishment had been observable; after that, an expression of inquietude—becoming each moment more marked. No longer did he exhibit the proud aspect of a man, who felt himself master of the ground; but, on the contrary, appeared cowed and quailing in the presence of the new-comer—whom he had met at the entrance, and at once invited into the cabin. This manner was observable in the half-mechanical courtesy, with which he removed the bars, and took hold of the stranger's horse; as also in some phrases of welcome, to which he gave utterance in my hearing.

For myself, I was no longer regarded—any more than if I had been one of the dead-woods that stood around the clearing. The squatter passed without even looking at me—his whole attention seemingly absorbed by the new arrival!

It was natural I should regard with curiosity an individual, whose presence had produced such a wonderful effect; and my scrutinising gaze may have appeared rude enough to him.

I cannot say that he elicited my admiration. On the contrary, his appearance produced an opposite effect: I beheld him with what might be termed an instinct of repulsion: since I could assign no precise reason for the dislike, with which he had inspired me on sight.

He was a man of about thirty years of age; of a thin spare body, less than medium height; and features slightly marked with the *bar sinister*. A face without beard—skin of cadaverous hue—nose sharply pointed—chin and forehead both receding—eyes small, but sparkling like those of a ferret—and long lank black hair, thinly shading his cheeks and brows—were the prominent characteristics of this man's portrait.

His dress was of a clerical cut and colour—though not of the finest fabric. The coat, trousers, and vest, were of black broad-cloth—the coat and waistcoat being made with standing collars, similar in style to those worn by Wesleyan ministers—or more commonly by Catholic priests—while a white cravat, not over clean, and a hat with curving boat-brim, completed the saintly character of the costume.

Judging from his personal appearance, I concluded that I saw, in the individual before me, the Methodist minister of Swampville. If so, it would account for the obsequiousness of his host, though not satisfactorily. There was something more than obsequiousness in Holt's manner—something altogether different from that deferential respect, with which the gospel minister is usually received in the houses of the humbler classes. Moreover, the character of the squatter—such as I had heard it, and such as I had myself observed it—bore no correspondence with the attitude of reverence he had so suddenly assumed. Even under the hypothesis, that the new-comer was his clergyman, I was puzzled by his behaviour.

He in the ecclesiastical costume appeared to be a man of few words; and of gesture he made a like limited use—having passed me, without even the courtesy of a bow. On the contrary, I was honoured with a glance of cynical regard—so palpable in its expression, as to cause an itching in my fingers, notwithstanding the saintly gown. I contented myself, however, with returning the glance, by one I intended to bear a like contemptuous expression; and, with this exchange, we separated from each other.

I remained by my stand without offering remark, either to the squatter or his guest. The only change I effected in my position, was to sit down upon the stump—where, with my rifle between my knees, I resolved to await the issue.

All idea of using the weapon was gone out of my mind—at least, against Hickman Holt. He was *her* father: I would as soon have thought of turning its muzzle to my own body.

I tarried, therefore, with no hostile intention. On the contrary, I only waited for an opportunity to propose some pacific arrangement of our difficulty; and my thoughts were now directed to this end.

I had every chance of observing the movements of the two men: since, instead of entering the cabin, they had stopped in front of it—where they at once became engaged in conversation. I took it for granted that I was myself the subject; but, after a time, I began to fancy I was mistaken. Judging from the earnest manner of both—but more especially from Holt's gestures and frequent ejaculations—something of still greater interest appeared to be the theme of their dialogue. I saw the squatter's face suddenly brighten up—as if some new and joyous revelation had been made to him; while the features of his visitor bore the satisfied look of one, who was urging an argument with success.

They were evidently talking of some topic beyond my affair, and unconnected with it; but what it could be, I was unable even to guess. Perhaps had I listened more attentively, I might have arrived at some knowledge of it—since words were occasionally uttered aloud—but my eyes were busier than my ears; and at that moment, neither the squatter nor his guest was the subject of my thought. Beyond them was the attraction that fascinated my gaze—that thing of roseate golden hue, whose shining presence seemed to light up the dark interior of the cabin—gleaming meteor-like through the interstices of the logs—now softly moving from side to side, and now, thank Heaven! gliding towards the door!

Only for a moment stood she silently on the stoop—one smiling moment, and she was gone. Her fair face was once more hidden, behind the rude *jalouse* of the logs; but the smile remained. It was mine; and lingered long within the trembling temple of my heart.

CHAPTER XXVII.

YES—YES!

Towards the interior of the hut, hallowed by such lovely presence, I continued to direct my glances—with an occasional side-look, noting the movements of the two men. Whatever had been the exciting topic of discourse, but the moment before, I saw that it was now changed; and that I was now myself the subject of their conversation. This I could tell by their looks and gestures—evidently bearing upon me and my affair.

Conscious that I was observing them—and as if desirous of conferring more privately—they passed round to the rear of the cabin; where for the time they were out of my sight as well as hearing. So far from regretting this movement, it was just what I desired: it left me free to continue the pleasant espionage in which I had engaged.

Now more boldly my eyes explored the dark interior of the hut—more freely roamed my glance along the interstices of the logs. Gladly should I have gone up to the doorway—fain would I have been to enter—had I not been restrained; but delicacy, and something more, stood in the way; and I was forced to keep my ground.

Again I saw the bright form fitting within. Gliding gently across the floor—as if on tiptoe, and by stealth—the young girl paused for a while near the back-wall of the cabin. Close behind this, the two men were conversing. Did she go there to listen? She might easily hear what was said: I could myself distinguish the voices, and almost the words. She remained motionless; and, as well as I could judge, in an attitude of attention—her head lowered, and her body slightly bent forward.

I was forming conjectures as to her motive, when I saw her moving away from the spot. In another instant, she appeared in the doorway—this time evidently with some design, as her manner and attitude

betokened. For a moment, she stood upon the stoop, fronting towards me, but with her face averted, and her eyes by a side-glance directed towards the rear of the hut. She appeared to look and listen—as if noting the position of the men; and then, seemingly satisfied that she was not herself observed, she suddenly faced round, and came gliding towards me!

Taken by surprise—a surprise mingled with sweet satisfaction—I rose to my feet; and stood silently but respectfully awaiting her approach.

I had acted with prudence in not speaking: for I saw by her manner that the movement was a stolen one. Moreover, the finger, raised for an instant to her lips, admonished me to silence. I understood the signal, so piquantly given; and obeyed it.

In another instant, she was near—near enough for me to hear her words—delivered in a half-whisper. She had paused before me in an attitude that betokened the fear of interruption; and, before speaking, she cast behind her another of those unquiet looks.

'Brave stranger!' said she, in hurried undertone, 'I know you are not afraid of my father; but oh, sir! for mercy's sake, do not fight with him!'

'For your sake,' I said, interrupting her, and speaking in a low but impressive tone—'for your sake, fair Lilian, I shall not fight with him. Trust me, there is no fear. I shall bear anything, rather than—'

'Hush!' said she, again motioning me to silence, at the same time glancing furtively behind her. 'You must not speak: you may be heard! Only listen to me. I now know why you are here. I came out to tell you something.'

'I listen.'

'Father does not now wish to quarrel with you: he has changed his mind. I have just heard what they said. He intends to make you a proposal. Oh, sir! if you can, please agree to it; for then there would be no trouble. I hope there will be none!'

'For you, fair Lilian, I shall agree to it—whatever the conditions be. Can you tell me what proposal he intends making me?'

'I heard him say he would sell— Oh, mercy! they are coming—if I am seen'—

The murmuring words were drowned by the louder voices of the men—who were now heard returning round the angle of the wall. Fortunately, before they had reached the front of the cabin, the young girl had glided back into the doorway; and no suspicion appeared to be entertained by either of the clandestine visit just paid me.

On rounding the corner, the stranger stopped; while the squatter continued to advance, until within a few paces of where I stood. Then pausing, he erected his gigantic form to its full height; and, for a moment, confronted me without speaking. I noticed that his countenance no longer bore signs of angry passion; but, on the contrary, betrayed some traces of a softer feeling—as of regret and contrition.

'Stranger!' said he at length, 'I've two things to propose to ye; an' ef ye'll agree to them, thur's no need why you an' I shed quarrel—leest of all plug one another wi' bullets, as we wur agwine to do the minnit ago.'

'Name your conditions!' rejoined I, 'and if they are not impossible for me to accept, I promise you they shall be agreed to.'

With Lilian in my thoughts, they would be hard indeed, if I could not square with whatever terms he might propose.

'They ain't impossible—neyther o' 'em; thur only just an' fair.'

'Let me hear them—believe me, Hickman Holt, I shall judge them most liberally.'

'Fust, then, you called me a coward. Do ye take that back?'

'Willingly I do.'

'So fur good; an' now for the tother proposal I

hev to make. I don't acknowledge yar right to this clarin'. I've made it; an' call it my own, as a sovereign citizen of these United States; an' I don't care a cuss for preemption right, since I don't believe in any man's right to move me off o' it. But I ain't so durned partickler 'bout this hyar bit o' groun'. Another 'll answer my bizness equally as well—maybe better—an' ef ye'll pay me for my improvements, ye can take both clarin' an' cabin, an' hev no more muss about it. Them's my proposals.'

'How much do you expect for these improvements? At what sum do you value them?'

I trembled, as I awaited the answer. My poor purse felt light as it lay against my bosom—far lighter than the heart within; though that had been heavier but an hour before. I knew that the sack contained less than two hundred dollars, in notes of the Planters' Bank; and I feared that such a sum would never satisfy the expectations of the squatter.

'Wal, stranger,' replied he, after a pause, 'thur worth a good wheen o' dollars; but I shan't valley them myself. I'll leave that part o' the bizness to a third individual—my friend as stands thur; an' who's a just man, an's been some'at o' a lawyer too. He'll say what's fair atween us. Wen't ye, Josh?'

I thought this rather a familiar style of address, on the part of the squatter, towards his clerical and saint-like friend; but I refrained from shewing my astonishment.

'Oh, yes,' replied the other, 'I'll value the property with pleasure—that is, if the gentleman desires me to do so.'

'How much do you think it worth?' I inquired with painful anxiety.

'Well, I should say that, for the improvements Mr Holt has made, a hundred dollars would be a fair price.'

'A hundred dollars?'

'Yes—in cash, of course, I mean.'

'Will you be satisfied with that sum?' said I, turning to Holt for the answer.

'Partly satisfied—so long it's in cash.'

'I agree to give it then.'

'All right, stranger! a bargain's a bargain. You kin shell out the dollars; an' I'll gie you pursession afore this gentleman—who'll witness it in writin', ef you like.'

'I want no writing. I can trust to your word.'

It was no flattery: I felt at the moment that the squatter—rudely as he had acted—was still possessed of an honourable principle; and I knew that, under the circumstances, his word would be not only as good as his bond, but better! I made no hesitation, therefore; but, counting out the money, placed it upon the stump—alongside that curious document, impaled there by the blade of the squatter's knife.

'When 'ud ye like to take pursession?' asked the outgoing tenant.

'At your convenience,' I replied, wishing to behave as courteously as possible.

'It won't take me long to move. My furniter ain't very cumbersome; an' I kud let ye in to-morrow, ef't want't that I hev some unexpected bizness with my friend hyar. Say day arter the morrow? Ef ye'll kum then, ye'll find me ready to deliver up. Will that answer for ye?'

'Admirably!' was my reply.

'All right, then! I'd ask ye in, but thar's nothin' to gie you—'ceptin' that piece o' deer-meat, an' its raw. Besides, stranger, I've some partickler bizness *jest now*, that I'm bleeged to see to.'

'Oh, never mind! I shall not need refreshment till I reach Swampville.'

'Wal, then, I'll bid you good-mornin', at the same time wishin' you luck o' your bargain.'

'Thanks—good-morning!'

I leaped into my saddle, and turned my horse's head towards the entrance of the enclosure. I should

have given him the touch to go forward with more reluctance, had I not perceived the fair Lillian gliding out of the cabin, and proceeding in the same direction!

Two or three of the bars had been replaced by the clerical visitor; and she had gone, apparently, to remove them. Was it simple courtesy, or a pretence to speak with me? My heart heaved with a tumultuous joy, as I fancied that the latter might be her motive.

When I reached the entrance, the bars were down; and the young girl stood leaning against one of the uprights—her round white arm embracing the post—envious piece of timber!

'Promise me, we shall meet again!' said I, bending down, and speaking in a half-whisper.

She looked back towards the cabin with a timid glance. We were not observed. The two men had gone into the horse-shed. In her fingers, I noticed the flower of a bignonia. She had taken it from among the golden tresses of her hair. Her cheek rivalled the crimson of its corolla, as she flung the blossom upon the saddle-bow.

'Promise me!' I repeated in a more earnest tone.

'Yes—yes!' she replied in a soft low voice, that resembled the whisper of an angel; and then, hearing noise from the house, she glided hurriedly away.

'Yes—yes!' cried the mimic thrush, as I rode on through the tall tulip-trees. 'Yes—yes!' repeated a thousand rival songsters; or were the sounds I heard but the echoes of her voice, still pealing through the glad chambers of my heart?

A DAY UNDER ARMS IN HYDE PARK.

IN common with the remainder of the 20,800 volunteers who assembled under arms in Hyde Park on the memorable 23d of June, I have no doubt that I should feel considerable difficulty in assigning the real motive which first led me to enrol myself in the gallant Hundred-and-first Middlesex. Indeed, were I asked to state the reasons why I should not have done so, I could respond with much greater facility. Professionally, I have at my disposal but the very parings and fag-ends of leisure hours; and personally, I have neither the length, strength, nor, as the advertisements of outfitters say, 'the breadth round the shoulders,' to enable me to match myself with advantage against one of our possible Zouave visitors. If anybody had told me six months ago that I should be seen in Hyde Park with a long Enfield and a dust-coloured uniform, I should have laughed at him; and if my informant added that this escapade on my part would take place in presence of the Queen of England and half a million of her subjects, I should straightway have recommended him to the particular care of his medical attendant. Yet the prophecy would have been fulfilled. Constitutionally timid, with a strong love of ease, and a dislike amounting to an abhorrence of damp, my habitual conversation has been of the rifle and sword-bayonet; I have risen at fabulous hours to reach the rendezvous at the appointed times of drill; and I have run through all the moods and tenses of the proverbial 'Volunteers' weather.' A description of what I have undergone in the way of 'extension movements,' 'balance step without gaining ground,' and 'getting a comfortable seat upon my heel,' would constitute a neat medical treatise on *nervo-muscular* sensations. When I thought I had been trained and polished to the highest degree in the 'preliminary class,' which is the delicate synonym for the awkward squad, and I was permitted to join the

ranks, it was only to find that new trials await the brave. Company-drill and the intricacy of 'fours' surmounted, I was exercised at position-drill till my arms ached again; and finally, my knees were made to take their turn of duty when the regiment was in fullness of time instructed in bayonet-practice. Do I repine at the sufferings which I have thus brought on myself? Would I now retire, if I might do so without discredit? Or am I even disgusted with the constrained and sign-post 'regulation' attitude in which fame and prizes were most certainly to be won on Wimbledon Common? No, a thousand times; and though I indignantly repudiate the feeling which leads men to stroll about the streets in uniform on every occasion, I would not have forfeited for any light consideration the enjoyment and privilege of sharing in the Hyde Park display. Friendship, class-feeling, emulation, or what the *Times* calls instinct, may have led to my enrolment in the first instance. As the poet says—

Reason however able, cool at best,
Cries not for service, or but serves when prest,
Stays till we call, and then not often near,
But honest instinct comes a volunteer.

Reflection and the feeling of *esprit de corps* have since done much to assure me that our new rifle-force is wise, beneficial, and invigorating in its tendencies, independently of it being in the present state of Europe, a necessity; I therefore rejoice in the step which I have taken.

I did not, however, sit down to moralise on the reasons for volunteering, or to indulge in reminiscences of the childhood of our young national guard, now fast arriving at ripe and hardy manhood, but to note down, whilst the impression remains, the appearance which the review presented to those who were actors, not spectators, on that interesting occasion. For at least a fortnight or three weeks previously, there had been the greatest activity among the different corps, and drilling proceeded from early morn to dewy eve. Those whose acquaintance with a barrack-yard is confined to the smart and orderly parade, or whose idea of a soldier's existence is derived from what they have themselves seen at reviews, or read in accounts of service abroad, know nothing of the laborious and prolonged training which has first to be submitted to, and can realise but faintly the difficulties which must be encountered where every individual is a raw recruit. Intelligence counts for less in the first instance than is popularly supposed, the rudimentary steps being almost mechanical. A volunteer who attempts to use his brains until he knows his drill thoroughly, or at least as well as his instructor, most commonly ends by going obstinately wrong, and throwing his comrades into disorder. After a certain stage is passed, intelligence is of course invaluable, as was signally proved in Hyde Park, where one of the commanding officers, in the excitement of the moment, gave an order at the crisis of marching past, which, if obeyed, would have sent the entire battalion across the field with their backs to the sovereign, and which was therefore quietly disregarded by those to whom it was addressed. Regiments which were to take part in the review were divided between the desire of making as strong an appearance as possible upon the ground, and the dread of admitting men who, by their incomplete acquaintance with drill, might render the line unsteady, and so bring disgrace upon the corps. Everybody, however, was animated by a steady determination to do his best; and 'the new men,' in all the cases with which I am acquainted, really did wonders in the short interval which remained for preparation. At last the important day arrived, and colonels-commandant were divided between hope and fear in perceiving that the companies mustered unusually

strong. In our regiment, one hundred more than we had ever before been able to get together attended; and we marched into the Park exactly one-fifth in excess of the approximate return furnished to the War-office.

The line of approach was thronged as I never saw it before, and never expect to see it again; every window had its half-dozen occupants, and carriages and cabs were hustled aside with a degree of unconcern, at the bottom of which I suspect was the feeling that every one had been forced to get out of their way at some time or other, and that now we were to have our innings. I am afraid anybody whose pursuits led him that day from the West End to the neighbourhood of London Bridge, did not much accelerate his movements by taking a vehicle. At the Strand, there was a regular block for more than half an hour. The streams of gray, green, black, and red soldiery which flowed from every quarter, were dammed up at Charing Cross, till they were able to fall in with the tide which swept onwards to Constitution Hill. Our contribution to the general current was speedily diverted through Spring Gardens into St James's Park, and our course was then directed, without serious impediment, along the Mall and past Buckingham Palace. As the Queen was still there, although the royal carriages were flying about in all directions, we received orders to 'carry arms'; and a check occurring somewhere in front just at the same moment, we remained in that respectful attitude for a longer period, I must frankly confess, than even my feelings of loyalty would have prompted. I began at last to have a dismal foreboding that either my arm or my rifle would drop, and that there would be a disgraceful *exposé* of the Hundred-and-first Middlesex in the eyes of the public. Just then I learned, from some unmistakable though suppressed exclamations, that the sensation I have described was by no means confined to my individual case; and instantly—spiteful as the avowal may appear—I felt comforted, and could have held out for half an hour longer. Every one of my neighbours had his own specific for obtaining relief, by getting the little-finger here, or the middle-finger there; but, like the thousand infallible prescriptions for the toothache, the only sound advice that could be given was to bear it. Little did the admiring public know, as they looked at us with our rifles so trimly at 'the shoulder,' and with our feet monotonously 'marking time,' what we would have given to change places for five minutes with even the most unconscious of those infants, whose mammæ never could have intended them to be present in such numbers in the very densest of the crowd. At last the welcome order to advance was given, followed soon after by 'March at ease,' and a change of position instantly removed all sense of inconvenience. The character of the crowd was now altering rapidly. We had left behind the London of every-day experience—the busy, bustling metropolis, with just leisure enough to stare at the volunteers as they passed, feeling all the while that it was a pity they interfered so desperately with the thoroughfare; and we had got into the holiday, sight-seeing quarter, where we were surrounded by hundreds of the possessors, and thousands of the would-be possessors of green, red, white, and orange tickets, streaming on as fast as intervening obstacles would allow towards the scene of operations in Hyde Park. I have witnessed in my time numberless gatherings, which have been individually described in print next day as 'the brilliant concourse of beauty and fashion,' but I am bound in candour to admit, that I never before saw an equal number of lovely women. Philosophers may account for it as they like—uniforms *do* exercise a potent influence over the female mind. What reciprocal effect may have been experienced in our ranks, I will not pretend to say; but certain it is that we

got wofully out of step, and that poor Jones, who is notoriously susceptible, lost consciousness altogether, and was bumped up against dozens of times by his rear-rank man.

When, after many difficulties that beset our path through the crowd, we at length found ourselves within the enclosure, the grandeur and significance of the display was not all at once apparent, for some gently rising-ground lay between the spot at which we entered the lines and the quarter of the Park where the sight-seers were principally assembled; but enough was visible to kindle a feeling of enthusiastic satisfaction, that the Hundred-and-first Middlesex had not been backward in its response to the appeal made to the loyalty and patriotism of the country. Before us were massed the regiments and brigades which had already taken up their ground; and in the loose formation of the moment, an idea of strength, even greater than the actual amount, was conveyed. It could not be said that there was any prevailing uniform: gray, green, drab, and stone-colour were there in profusion and in every variety of combination. On our right was drawn up the magnificent body of volunteer cavalry, which, having allowed itself more latitude in dress—an approach to invisibility not being equally requisite in their case as in that of riflemen—shone dazzlingly by contrast in scarlet, the true British colour. The corps most distinctly visible to us was the Duke of Manchester's squadron, each member of which, as he sat, was prepared to hold his own in a cross-country gallop, the horses being individually valued at fabulous sums. On our left, there was a thick line of trees, which the eye failed to penetrate; but from the hum of voices, and the occasional cheering, it was evident that the space they overshadowed was not less densely thronged than the other portions of the Park, which we now began to perceive were literally darkened with spectators. Our mingled sensations, as we marched on to take up our allotted position, it would be difficult to describe. There was the feeling, semi-incredulous and semi-bashful, which naturally possesses men of peaceful habits on finding themselves for the first time part and parcel of a large military force, the objects of curiosity and interest to countless thousands; there was likewise the longing hope, amounting to personal anxiety, that our own corps would not fail to acquit itself at least as well as others; and there was throughout a burning desire to know 'what they are saying of us over yonder.' Notwithstanding the endless variety of events on that day, I believe it to have been one of those occasions when incidents otherwise trifling stamp themselves on the mind of a nation. I shall not forget for years the disgust I felt when a band of school-boys, about thirty in number, which was marching nearly abreast of our corps, appropriated the first genuine cheer we had received in the Park. Nothing but the strongest sense of discipline restrained me from quitting my place and kicking the schoolmaster, when he directed the boys to 'salute,' in acknowledgment of the compliment. Whether we had not sufficiently recovered our equanimity, or whether we were looking about us too much at the time, or both, I do not pretend to say, but it is certain that our first attempts at executing the simplest manoeuvres after we had been halted were anything but creditable. The consciousness that two crack metropolitan corps were looking at us critically on either flank did not improve matters. We did not actually get 'clubbed,' nor were the companies hopelessly mixed together, but short of that, I believe for the first two minutes we were doing everything that ought not to have been done. Since one unlucky 'half' in my school-days, I never remember such a humiliating sense of failure as I then experienced. At that moment, before the disorder could have been apparent to outsiders, our colonel rode to the spot, and, as if by magic, everything righted itself. He is an old soldier,

who has served with distinction, and, I may say, has almost created our corps. Between himself and every member of it the strongest feeling of regard exists. He had only looked at the company in which I happened to be—from which, being in front, wonders were of course expected—and I do not believe it lost 1-16th of an inch afterwards during the entire day. Now began the tedious process of 'dressing,' which I can well believe, if directed by a martinet, may be made the means of torture to a regiment. That shuffling backwards and forwards, without appearing to move, in that peculiar nondescript gait with which elaborate servants attend at table, and theatrical ghosts cross the stage, is to me the most odious of all the manoeuvres on a field-day. In our case, it was got over as soon as possible; and nothing struck me more than the marked *politesse militaire* with which the requests, rather than commands, were made by the army-officers attached to each brigade, to whom the important task of 'getting a perfect line' was intrusted.

Whatever may have been the verdict of the 'Senior' or 'Junior United Service' Clubs—and where such a large body of men unaccustomed to arms, brought together for the first time, were scanned with critical eye, there must have been numberless shortcomings—I am bound to say, that on the field, if we were veterans of the Old Guard, we could not have been treated with more consideration and respect; indeed, the staff-officer who acted as *attaché* to our brigade, seemed, if I may use the expression, taken aback by the proficiency which the volunteers had attained in so short a time. Once, I remember, we all came down to 'order arms' with remarkable ensemble, and I overheard him say to our colonel, that 'regulars would be puzzled to do it better than that.' There was little now to occupy our attention till the arrival of her Majesty, so that we were at liberty to look about us. Standing, as we did, near the centre of the line, we had probably as fine a view of the day's proceedings as could be obtained from our side of the Park. Right across the green-sward, at a distance of several hundred yards, was the principal body of spectators, at whom we looked with scarcely less interest than their eyes rested on us. Too remote to permit of their being individualised, they were yet sufficiently near to present features lending to their array a motley and somewhat fantastical appearance. Along the ground-line, the prevailing shade was dark, and suggestive of a frock-coated assembly, save where, at intervals, some tall red streaks denoted that guardsmen had been posted to mark the limits which the crowd were not to pass, and to stake out, as it were, the ground reserved for the movements of the volunteers. Here and there, tufts of brilliant uniforms protruded beyond the *cordon*, and shone conspicuously by contrast with the background, like flower-beds cut in a spreading lawn. Overhead, the long line of wood-work, as if to complete the picture, not inaptly representing a wide strip of gravel-walk, supported the assembly, which, radiant with many colours, like a collection of choice exotics, was contributed by England's daughters, to heighten the display.

Beyond the limits of the wide arena in which the events of the day were to take place, stately edifices rose in a semicircular form, and upheld on their roofs a company scarcely inferior in point of numbers. The residence of the opposition leader in the House of Commons, and that of the marshal representing the court of France, in particular, were thus covered with spectators. The comprehensive and sweeping *coup d'œil* to be gained from those points, must have recalled to many the gorgeous displays of ancient Rome, though the amphitheatre was such as she never possessed. Nor, though military spirit and love of country were eminently Roman virtues, can the long and brilliant history of that great empire furnish a parallel to the scene, more striking even from its

associations than by its actual grandeur, which in the present day was to be witnessed in one of her former colonies. Thoughts such as these, and the speculations to which they might have given rise, were put to flight by the appearance within the lines of the Duke of Cambridge, attended by a brilliant staff, who glanced along the ranks with evident interest. Not many minutes afterwards, the guns of the royal artillery announced that her Majesty had left Buckingham Palace, and was on her way to Hyde Park. I may mention that this was one of the first occasions on which the public had an opportunity of seeing a battery of the new guns invented by Sir W. Armstrong, which more resemble toys than weapons intended for actual service. But the sharp barking sound about their discharge effectually intimates that, if necessity arose, they could also bite. As the squadron of Life-guards which preceded the royal cortège came in sight, the whole line received orders to salute, and instantly the 20,000 rifles, as if of their own accord, sprang into the air and came down to the 'Present.' As the carriages drove slowly along the line, we had an excellent opportunity of seeing the royal party. The person who most engaged my attention, next to the Queen herself, was a French officer of rank, distinguished among the cloud of equestrians by his glowing scarlet pantaloons. We stigmatise turkeys as foolish birds for flying at pieces of red rag; but henceforth I shall be careful how I ridicule them. I had asked myself several times that day with what object I individually went to the Park, nay, till that moment, it was perhaps an open question whether I had risen or fallen in my own esteem by becoming a volunteer; but a single glance at those habiliments was sufficient to resolve all my doubts; I felt that, next to shewing our attachment to the sovereign, the object with which we had all attended was to make an impression on the mind of the individual—a baron, I believe—by whom they were worn; and my only regret was that the 2500 Orphéonistes, who were to arrive from France the following week, were not present in the most commodious reserved seats which the authorities of the War-office could prepare for their reception. I looked at my companions nearest me, and though not a word passed between us, I could trace the same sentiment sparkling in the eyes of all. I knew at once what Garriek meant by saying: 'I never play so well as when F—— is in the pit.' When the Queen had passed along the entire line, the royal company drew up at the flagstaff, and we prepared in our turn to make the circuit of the field. Not long ago, a special levée was held at St James's Palace, for the reception of officers of the different volunteer corps. Her Majesty was now to receive, in a suitable hall of audience, the homage of a portion, and only a portion of the national force of which those gentlemen had attended as the delegates.

It is worthy of being borne in mind, that the volunteers who assembled on this occasion in Hyde Park—a fair average of the force of which they formed but the sixth part—as nearly as possible equalled in numbers that British army which entered on the gigantic undertaking of crushing the power of Russia in the Crimea. Formed not of the waste leaves, but from the very flower of English society, they were the men to fight such a battle as the world has not witnessed since the days of Cressy and Agincourt, where the odds at which Englishmen discomfited their foes were greater even than those which earned for one of Napoleon's hussar regiments the vaunted motto of *Dix contre un*.

As I mentioned already, the execution of the few simple movements, when we were taking up our position, had not filled me with the belief that we individually should be distinguished by superiority of discipline; but I soon found that something—which which I am convinced the presence of that scarlet-trouser'd subject

of 'our great ally' had largely to do—had breathed into our ranks, and into our very step, a spirit and precision which I never remembered to have seen equalled on our own parade-ground. Our advance was but leisurely, as we had to make frequent halts; we were thus enabled to see a good deal of what was going forward at the other side of the Park. The cavalry brigade passed almost before we were aware of it, but we looked curiously and anxiously at the different infantry columns as they neared the royal carriage. The Honourable Artillery Company came first, marching splendidly, and, with their bear-skin hats and Guards' uniform, looking so like those privileged regiments, that one could not help feeling curious to know whether a spice of jealousy existed, or whether the grenadiers held the opinion that imitation is the truest flattery. The new Six-foot Guards came next, and their already towering height was increased by helmets somewhat after the Russian pattern. It must have been these which exercised such an imposing effect on the imagination of the correspondent of a French journal, as to make him write that no one but a nobleman was admitted into that corps.

I do not propose to follow in anything like detail the filing past her Majesty. The newspapers have recorded with impartiality the serviceable appearance of the artillery corps, the steady bearing of the London Brigade, the admirable time kept by the Westminster, the tasteful uniforms and gallant appearance of the Irish and Scotch corps, the square and massive advance of the Inns of Court battalion, and the hearty greeting bestowed on the provincial regiments as they passed. The spectators saw more of these than I could possibly do; but while waiting to take our turn, I noticed that at every point which was likely to test the proficiency of the various corps, staff-officers were posted, or had stationed themselves, who scanned silently but minutely the mode in which the manoeuvres were executed. The last wheel had brought us quite close to the line of spectators, and we could hear their friendly comments and encouraging cheers distinctly, as we halted to allow the other regiments in front of us to get well out of our way. At last, the regiment which had till then obscured our view in front moved off, and we saw before us a clear space, bordered on the right by an apparently interminable line of spectators, with some carriages close to the flagstaff, where we knew the royal party were drawn up. An unflinching test of manners and good birth, now, as in the days of the *vieille noblesse*, is said to be the mode in which one enters a drawing-room. That strip of grass was to be our *tapis d'honneur*, and our future credit depended greatly on the manner in which we marched across it. The rifles, which before had been trailed, were now brought to the shoulder, and we started, preserving the line as accurately as possible. The temptation to disobey the command, 'Eyes front,' was prodigious; but we resisted to the utmost of our power, as we knew well that looking to the right or left, swinging either arm, or failing to keep step during the execution of this manoeuvre, would destroy the harmony and precision which constitute its entire effect. It was also imperative to preserve 'the touch' at a particular portion of the arm of one's right and left hand man, so that the whole line might go forward like a wall, or, as in the case of a machine, that all the parts should move together. Just before we reached the royal carriage, I managed to steal a momentary glance, which shewed me that her Majesty was standing and leaning forward, and that her face exhibited a degree of interest and gratification widely different from the expression of mere approval which *etiquette* imposes at ordinary displays.

An awkward joggle on my left awakened me to the danger of suffering my eyes to wander into forbidden paths. From that moment, if my spinal marrow had been frozen, I could not have exhibited

less deviation from the perpendicular. The approving voices of the spectators soon convinced us that we had passed the trying ordeal with *éclat*; and they burst out again with increased cordiality when we wheeled to the left by successive companies to resume our position at the other side of the Park. We had now been for a considerable period under arms; we had nearly exhausted the details of the official programme; we had not unsuccessfully discharged the functions allotted to us; and all at once the true British craving for sandwiches burst out with violence. As we had not been told to bring ammunition, the cartouche-boxes, it was held, might very pardonably contain some 'ammunition-bread.' Flasks, not of powder, made their appearance, while cartridge-paper in sheets, and, spite of our sepy experiences, greased into the bargain, soon covered the ground. Just as all but the slowest men had produced their edibles, and we were allowing ourselves ten minutes for refreshment, a horrid sound of 'Forward!' fell upon our ears. Then was to be witnessed the unaccustomed sight of troops with rifles in one hand and sandwiches in the other; numbers hastily trying to stow theirs away in boxes, whose straps were flapping about in most unmilitary disorder. Several volunteers, in their eagerness to escape rebuke, thrust their lunches inside their tunics, to be recovered at a more favourable opportunity. This was at length afforded by the delay consequent on the march of other corps, numbers of whom had still to pass before the Queen. Short pipes, also, began to emerge from surreptitious hiding-places; but this was an irregularity that could be only winked at, and was indulged at some risk: one of my neighbours had his pipe jerked from between his teeth by a sudden order of 'Three paces—right close.' At the expiration of nearly two hours, the marching past had concluded; and we once more found ourselves drawn up in a line extending across the Park for about a mile, with ranks in many instances fifteen deep. A sharp ringing blast by the trumpeter to the Duke of Cambridge gave the signal for the whole line to advance some hundred yards—a movement which must have looked remarkably well from the opposite side. A royal salute by all under arms completed the programme contemplated by the Horse-guards. But the occasion was not to end thus tamely. By one of those sympathetic impulses, vivid and irresistible as the electric current, which dart through masses assembled with a common object, the sentiments of the entire body found vent spontaneously in a cheer, expressive at once of their loyalty, devotion, and new-born spirit of self-confidence. This outburst of dormant feeling exhibiting the strong personal affection which has been created and matured by the good government of the last twenty-three years, is said to have powerfully affected her Majesty; and the Duke of Cambridge not only sent an aide-de-camp to stop the cheering, which was in defiance of express orders, but waved his sword to enforce the command. It was not easy, however, to quell the tumult; the cheers were again and again repeated, and caps and even rifles kept time overhead, and were whirled round and round like leaves in a tornado. On the side of the spectators, the cheering was no less enthusiastic; and the departure of her Majesty was marked by all the characteristics of an ovation. It afforded me unmeasured gratification to learn that the French nobleman, to whom I before alluded, was profoundly impressed by the scene. I heard from a staff-officer, who stood close by his side, that, although he made the utmost efforts to preserve a calm exterior, when the cheering broke out, his colour came and went repeatedly; and his face betrayed the feeling that there would be more to be done than he had bargained for, should circumstances lead to his return.

With banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his deadly foe.

His Royal Highness the commander-in-chief having expressed to the officers in charge of the several brigades his admiration and astonishment at the highly creditable manner in which the various regiments had acquitted themselves, we prepared to leave the Park, which was completely deserted in an hour and a half afterwards. On the route homewards, more even than on our way to the review, I was struck with the thoroughly popular character of the volunteer movement. Everywhere we were recognised as of the people, and way was made for us, not only with good-humour, but with an evident pride in our appearance, as if the spectators felt that some portion of the credit we had earned was reflected on themselves. If the English character were not so widely different from the French, I am convinced there would have been instances of fraternisation in the streets. But very slight signs of fatigue were exhibited by the volunteers; whenever temporary stoppages occurred, many were to be seen rather dancing than 'marking time' in the places where they stood, to the lively airs played by the bands.

Taken as a whole, the volunteer review of the 23d June 1860 must be regarded as an event which not only does honour to the spirit and patriotism of the British race, but is without a parallel in ancient or modern history. The light in which soldiering was regarded in early centuries prohibits the supposition that it would be taken up, half as a pastime, half as a precautionary measure, by men engaged in other pursuits. In later periods, Spanish treasure and French conscription equally failed to produce an array to which the same *prestige* could attach. Turning from the contemplation of the past to the prospects of the future, the volunteering movement should be lauded and encouraged, for the beneficial influences that it will exercise on our English youth, and for the moral effect which it must produce on the minds of continental statesmen. Instead of those disgraceful panics which the rumours of a possible invasion periodically occasioned, England may henceforth feel confident that she is once more in a position to interfere with success abroad, and to keep her own in security at home.

R A T S.

Or Rats, while their number is legion, the varieties are but three—the water-rat, black rat, and brown rat. The first named, a harmless inoffensive creature, subsisting entirely upon the roots growing in the water wherein he lives and dies, is more akin to the beaver than the rat, and may at once be dismissed as having been improperly thrust into a family with which he has no affinity. Of the remaining branches naturalised in England, the black rat (*Mus rattus*) claims precedence on the score of priority of occupation. Although Waterton, in his hatred of his brown brother, calls him 'an injured Briton,' there is little doubt of the eastern origin of the tribe. The precise period of its migration to this country is not to be fixed with certainty; but whether the rat first took up his abode here in the sixteenth century, as is generally supposed, or not, it is evident, from the frequent allusions to the 'insatiable little brute' in the poetry of the time, that it was familiar enough to the citizens of Elizabethan London. Rosalind, it will be remembered, talks of being be-rhymed when she was an Irish rat; and the friends of the lucky hero of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wit without Money* can only account for his unceasing good-fortune by his being haunted by some fairy, old woman, or rat, the company of either being equally desirable and efficacious.

For a long period the black rat remained the sole representative of his race in England; but the ship that brought over the Elector George to fill the British throne, brought also the brown rat (*Mus decumanus*), destined to oust him from his possessions. The new-comer received the name of the Norwegian

rat, on much the same principle as the white or crimson-coloured geological formation called 'green sandstone' was christened, as the Scandinavians were happily unacquainted with the animal until long after its naturalisation among ourselves. Whether the intruders came from India, Persia, or Gibraltar, is undecided. They at all events proved too strong for the elder fraternity, which gradually diminished before them; though there does not seem to be any foundation for the supposition of a deadly enmity existing between the two races, since in France they are found living amicably and sociably together. We incline to Mr Rodwell's theory, that the fairer foreigners, whether through their superior fascinations, or their superior strength, carried off the black ladies from their liege-lords; and so, in a few generations, the Browns would naturally obtain predominance in numbers over the Blacks. The latter, indeed, were thought to have become extinct, or nearly so. A man who had walked the sewers for twelve years, saw only two of them during the whole time. The proprietor of the well-known 'Happy Family' of cats, rats, mice, monkeys, and birds, used to sell specimens of the species at three guineas each, until the destruction of the St Giles's Kookery disclosed his hunting-ground, and spoiled the market. The black rat still lurks in the garrets and roofs of ancient London houses; and in some of the older metropolitan granaries, the workmen occasionally disturb 'great black fellows as would frighten a lady into asterisks.'

Since the irruption of the Browns, they have had a century and a half in which to increase and multiply, and have carried out that injunction at such a rate, that a rat-census for 1860 would make rather an alarming blue-book. The females breed at three months old, live in a state of polygamy, add to the vermin population five or six times in the year, and produce eight, twelve, fourteen, sixteen, and sometimes as many as eighteen young in a litter. It has been calculated that in three years there will spring no less than 651,000 rats from a single pair. Although this seems too enormous a number to be correct, it would perhaps be difficult to overestimate the numbers of these animals. 600,000 rats were killed in Paris in the short space of a fortnight, merely to obtain their skins for a couple of manufacturers at Grenoble; 6000 have met their deaths from the dogs and men at the slaughter-house of Mont-faucon in a month. At the present time, Marseille is overrun with them; traps and poison proving futile against the army of destroyers, who range even the public streets with impunity; the cats have fled in affright; and the only reliance of the inhabitants lies in the arrival of a cargo of English terriers, our little champions of the pit alone being of any avail against the invading host.

The voracity of rats is no less remarkable than their fecundity. Their taste is universal; nothing comes amiss to their palate. Their love for free-trade in corn makes it necessary to floor our Thames granaries with concrete and glass, and panoply their walls in sheet-iron. They swarm in the sewers near the slaughter-houses of Newgate Market, for the sake of the offal; they undermine stacks of cheeses in warehouses, often falling victims to their unskilful engineering, by being crushed by them. To the careful housewife, rats are a perpetual annoyance; supping off her best yellow or mottled, making light of her moulds and dips, defying her to save her bacon, or preserve her jams and pastry, poaching her eggs, licking her butter, dipping their tails in flasks of oil, and even devouring boots and shoes. They are the pests of the farmhouse, dirtying every place, boring holes in boarded floors, undermining stone pavements, gnawing harness, killing the chickens and ducks, or living in the heart of the corn-rick.

In spring, the country rat, forsaking the stack in which he has been snugly housed during the winter, takes to the fields; he burrows like the rabbit, and makes cruel war upon young leverets and game of all kinds. Not content with eating his fill of grain in the fields, he lays by a store for future use. With the arrival of autumn, the majority of barn-rats return to their old homes; some, however, prefer the wild life of the woods, and become regular poachers. These grow longer and more weasel-like, their hair shaggier, their whiskers longer, and their character altogether more determined and ferocious. Marauders of this sort have put the Zoological Society to great expense, to protect their charges against their depredations. They have driven the puffins from Puffin Island, and made the Cape geese in Richmond Park take to building their nests in the oak pollards, that they may hatch their eggs in security. In the indulgence of their predilection for eggs, rats display great judgment. It would appear almost impossible for them to carry off such fragile spoil without breakage, but they do contrive to do so. If the theft is achieved without a confederate, the rat stretches out its fore-leg underneath the egg, steadies it above with its cheek, and hops away cautiously upon three legs. To convey an egg from the bottom to the top of a house is a still more difficult affair, and probably an impossibility for a single rat to perform. With the aid of a partner, the operation is thus managed: the male rat stands upon his head, and lifts up the egg with his hind-legs; the female taking it thence in her fore-paws, secures it till her lord ascends a step higher; and so they proceed from stair to stair, till their booty is deposited safely in their hole. A London pastry-cook had some fine eggs which he prized highly, but the number of which was mysteriously diminished night after night. Suspicion, of course, fell upon the domestics. One of them, a maid-servant, hearing one night a noise on the stairs, stole out on the landing, fancying she might be fortunate enough to detect the egg-pilferer. She was not mistaken, although she was considerably astonished at discovering who the real offenders were. She saw two rats, one larger than the other, busily engaged in carrying the cherished eggs down stairs, and felt too interested in watching their proceedings to think of disturbing them. The big rat stood on his hind-legs, with his fore-paws and head resting on the step above; the lady-rat rolled the egg gently towards her spouse; clasping it gently, but firmly, he lifted it carefully on the step upon which he stood, holding it there until she came and took charge of it, when he descended a step lower; till the clever pair reached the lowermost floor with their prize uninjured.

The wholesale larceny with which the rat is too justly charged, is criminal enough, in all conscience, but worse remains behind. He has been known to make a meal of the fingers and toes of a living baby. Forty years ago, a pie-maker, finding his delicacies unaccountably disappear, determined to lie in wait in his bakehouse one night, and so catch the delinquents. Unfortunately, they caught him, and devoured the unfortunate pie-man in preference to his pies. There is one dish that is more tempting to the rat's palate than any other, and for which he will desert anything else in the eatable world, and that is, a defunct relative. Should two rats agree to settle their differences by a mortal combat, their friends and acquaintances look on as complacently as distinguished amateurs contemplate a fight for the championship. But immediately the affair is concluded by the death of one of the combatants, the spectators break up the ring, and incontinently set upon victor and vanquished, and eat them up then and there. Woe, too, to any unfortunate meeting with an accident, or becoming infirm, for he is gobbled up without remorse. When a rat's leg is found in a trap, instead of its being a

proof of his resolution in preferring to leave a limb behind rather than remain in captivity, the chances are that some of his kith and kin have eaten him alive. In consequence of this propensity for cannibalism, when Mrs Rat becomes a mother, she is obliged to hide her offspring, lest papa or some old gentleman of his acquaintance should make his dinner of them, which he would certainly do if he found them unprotected. For the same reason, wise old rats retire into solitude, disgusted with their kind; and if attacked in their retreat, prove desperate foes, beating off any rat, without regard to sex, that ventures to intrude on their privacy. An old gentleman of this description will keep a house clearer of vermin than any cat or dog, for he will allow no brother near his throne.

The rat can scarcely be considered a courageous animal; he relies more upon his cunning than strength, and in presence of a superior enemy, thinks only of escape; but if rendered desperate, by being pressed into a corner, will turn savagely on his pursuer—the sewer rat being incomparably more ferocious than his compeer.

The rat's weapons of offence and defence consist of four long sharp teeth, two in the front of the upper, and two in the lower jaw, formed like wedges, and always possessing a fine sharp cutting edge, coated with a hard enamel, the inner part being of a soft ivory-like composition. The teeth of the upper jaw work exactly into those of the lower one, their centres meeting in the act of gnawing, the soft part worn away in that operation being replaced by a fresh growth from the bottom. The incessant working of the animal's incisor teeth against the hard substance, prevents the jaw being locked by the rapid growth of the soft interior of the teeth. The hind-feet of the rat are so supple that they may be turned outwards, till the heel is in front; he is thus enabled to hang on to trees, railings, or walls by his hind-toes, and let himself down perpendicular places gently and safely.

In justice to an object of such universal dislike, it is but fair to mention the good qualities of the rat. He is not quite devoid of all feeling and affection; both Mr Jesse and Mr Cotton attest having seen blind rats being led by their companions to a place of security. Nor are instances rare of the rat becoming tame, and shewing its attachment to those who pet and fondle it; it can even be trained to live in amity with its natural foes the ferret, cat, and dog. When in a state of liberty, rats appear to be free from disease of any kind—a fact to be perhaps attributed to their great cleanliness, all their leisure time being spent sitting on end, cleaning their fur. To wetting their feet, they have a great aversion; even the sewer rats, who might not be expected to be so scrupulous, only taking to the sewage in case of danger. Spite, however, of their dislike of water, they do not allow it to interfere in their predatory excursions, or to prevent them establishing themselves on board ship. Once fairly lodged there, nothing will drive them away as long as they can find means of satisfying their thirst. They ascend the rigging to extract the moisture from the sails, and in default of water, attack the spirits till they are laid prostrate by intoxication. Ships are often so overrun with the creatures as to necessitate the use of brimstone and charcoal, by which they are suffocated. On the return of the steamer *Terrible* from the Mediterranean, four hundred were caught in three days; and on board of another man-of-war, the vermin destroyed a hundredweight of biscuit daily. However far they may gnaw their way through the interior of a vessel, they never pass through the sides, probably because the wood being saturated by the salt-water, becomes too nauseous for their taste.

Rat-catching as an occupation is in but low repute. The country rat-catcher, usually a man of few words, and those few not always to be relied upon, is a compound of the gipsy, gamekeeper, and poacher. By night or day, awake or asleep, he is seldom seen

apart from his dogs, ever ready to espouse their master's quarrels, and not backward in using their teeth on any disturber of his serenity. Looked upon with suspicion by all who employ him, the rat-catcher makes but a poor living, let him work as hard as he may. In London, an honest rat-catcher is looked upon as a rarity indeed, public opinion connecting them with dog-stealers, burglars, and other breakers of the laws. Nevertheless, such are to be found. The two principal members of the metropolitan fraternity destroy between them about nine thousand rats per annum, and have seldom less than from one hundred to a thousand on sale at the rate of two-and-sixpence a dozen: they calculate the cost of keeping one hundred rats in captivity at ten shillings a week. These legitimate practitioners contract with large establishments at an annual premium, according to the number of visits they are expected to make. The proprietor of a west-end hotel pays L.6 per annum; the rat-catchers attending once every week, capturing from twenty to thirty rats each time, which are of course their property. For the same amount, a metropolitan workhouse has its vermin poisoned regularly once a month. There are twenty-five regular rat-catchers in London, most of whom deal in dogs, ferrets, and rabbits. According to the last census, 2256 persons wrote themselves down 'vermin-killers.' The rat-catching of the London sewers is almost a monopoly, no one caring to interfere with the unpleasant trade of Jumper, Jem, and Jem's man. Carrying a bull's-eye lantern, a strong iron cage, and a short rake, these underground cliffionniers wade waist-deep in filth, to obtain rats for gentlemen who have a mind to try the prowess of their dogs against the fiercest opponents. More valuable prizes sometimes fall to their share, articles which have accidentally found their way down the drains, or been purposely thrown there by some fugitive thief. The worthy trio have not been suffered to follow their unsavoury calling quite unmolested. A lord mayor once threatened to punish them for trespassing, and an officious constable took them into custody for being found unlawfully in the city sewers, and having in their possession a key to unlock the various trap-doors. Since that, neither officials nor rivals have interfered with their pursuit. All those conversant with the subject agree, that the number of rats in the sewers has greatly diminished of late years: when flushing was first introduced, cart-loads of drowned rats were carried into the Thames; that is not the case now, either in consequence of a falling off in the sub-terrene population, or else because, as one familiar with the sewers suggests, 'rats is up to flushing now.' The sewers themselves afford but a small supply of food to their inhabitants; they serve rather as breeding-grounds, the animals making their homes in the holes formed by the falling in of bricks, or where old rotting house-drains in the smaller sewers empty themselves into a main one, whence they can find their way up into the adjacent houses. The introduction of pottery-pipes for drainage, impervious to the teeth of the rat, combined with improved trapping, has done wonders in decreasing the numbers of these rapacious vermin, by preventing them getting admission into the houses, and confining them to the unsupporting sewage.

Rat-catchers, who wish to allure the rats from any one place to another, either for the purpose of more conveniently destroying them, or the less commendable one of establishing them on the premises of one to whom they bear a grudge, practise rat-trailing. A red-herring is tied by the tail to a piece of string, with as little handling as possible. After dark, it is trailed round the places where the enemy is ensconced, the trailer striking off to the spot to which he wishes to attract the rats, and there leaving the bait. As soon as they catch the scent, off they set, nosing it like hounds, and in all probability will abide

where the trail is left. Old rags, or a calf's tail sprinkled with oil of aniseed, is still more effectual, used in the same way.

Recipes for the extirpation of rats are as plentiful as remedies for the gout or toothache. Dead rats powdered with arsenic laid in their holes; live ones dressed in red, covered with hot pitch, or belled and turned loose; fumigation with salt, oil of vitriol, lupins, or smallage seed; pounded dog's tongue (*Oxyglossum officinale*) placed in their quarters, are all warranted to drive the unwelcome guests away. Phosphorus—when plenty of water is provided for them—is highly recommended as a destroying agent. Arsenical paste; oatmeal, colocintida and honey; wild cucumber and black hellebore seeds; carbonate of barytes, mixed with dripping, have each their advocates, but the following is especially commended: Three ounces of treacle, one ounce of fine ground nuxvomica, well mixed together; then add one pound best white flour, half a pound bread-crumbs, cut to size of pease, and six drops of oil of caraway; mix thoroughly, and place near their holes.

Should any of our readers ever be bitten by a rat, no harm will follow if the part be immediately cleansed with yellow soap and warm water; and with this piece of information, which we hope they will never require, we take leave of them and our subject.

GRASS.

BEAUTIFUL sight—refreshing green,
Constant and true to changing Earth,
Whene'er she gives a flow'et birth,
Thou near the floral child art seen.

The king-cup and the daisy fair
Would far less charming seem to me
Didst thou not robe the mead and lea,
And guard the floral beauties there.

On castle wall and rampart lone,
From fissures old I've seen thee peep,
As if love-vigil there to keep
Over the damp decaying stone.

From the wet shingle on the beach
I've seen thee lift thy tufted spears,
Oft brilliant with the briny tears
Of Ocean struggling up the reach.

In haunts unknown to single flower,
On boundless plains without a tree,
Thou spread'st thy couch of greenery,
For insect blithe a sheltering bow.

A desert wild seems scarcely so,
If we but meet thy visage fair,
Thou sweetly smiling round us there,
We think of meads where cattle low.

When far and long from home we've been,
And come back with a fluttering heart,
With what a sudden joy we start,
Seeing once more thy distant green.

And if we have to seek a grave
Beneath the yew-tree's sacred gloom,
Though not one flower may on it bloom,
In beauty there thou'rt sure to wave;

And many a warm and holy tear
From pious watcher's cheek thou'st felt,
When on the rounded turf she's knelt,
Marking the grave of one most dear.

Earth's glory, rich in quiet charms,
Not spices of far Araby
Match thy delicious fragrant,
When thou liest dead in Autumn's arms.—J. E.

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